



Speech by

Hon. Kate Jones

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Thursday, 6 August 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Rangers

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.13 am): I am pleased to inform the House of a welcome increase in the number of rangers within our Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. I am proud to announce that, as at the end of June 2009, we now have 793 full-time equivalent ranger employees. This is an increase of 19 since the election. These rangers are assisted by around 340 support staff. We now have more rangers in Queensland than ever before. The number has increased by around 300 since 2000. It is a substantial increase that clearly demonstrates this government's recognition of rangers as the vital caretakers of our state's most precious natural assets.

And it is a big responsibility. Rangers now manage more than 12.5 million hectares of parks and state forests—nearly seven per cent of the state. The Bligh government has a target to achieve 12.9 million hectares of national park alone, and we are getting there. More national park estates are opening up virtually every month. D'Aguilar on Brisbane's north-western fringe recently expanded to become Australia's largest national park near a capital CBD. Up north, the Conway National Park near Airlie has expanded by 20 per cent. In addition, our rangers also manage approximately 72,000 square kilometres of state marine parks and jointly manage a further 345,000 square kilometres of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park with the Commonwealth government.

As rangers work out of more than 110 locations across Queensland they make an important contribution to regional economies and engage directly with our regional communities. Around four per cent of ranger positions are held by Indigenous staff who also help foster closer working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We continue our commitment to our ranger staff and I am pleased to say that eight new marine rangers have been appointed to Moreton Bay. I note that the member for Redlands asked me yesterday about dugong and turtle deaths in Moreton Bay, clearly in support of the new go-slow zones. This is in stark contrast to his LNP neighbour the member for Cleveland, who has publicly vowed that if they were on this side of the House they would wind back our zoning plan. Our commitments and priorities are clear and positive. We stand for jobs, services and reform while they resist, dither and cannot even agree on policy.